

FAIR MT. STERLING.

The Gate City Looks East to God's
Grand Mountains and West to
the Bluegrass.

As Seen By W. J. Lampton, the
Correspondent of the Cour-
rier Journal.

He Says, "Twixt the Bluegrass and the Knobs It Is
Snugly Situated—It Puts On 'Big City' Airs and
Has Good Grounds For Doing So.

ITS HEALTH, WEALTH, SOCIETY AND GEN-
ERAL CONDITIONS OF THE AL TYPE
—A BACHELOR'S HAVEN."

A TALE WELL TOLD

Standing with expectant feet,
Where the Knobs and Bluegrass meet,
Fair Mt. Sterling, fixed between,
Hopes one day to reign as Queen.

The fact of the business is that the Mt. Sterling people, looking to the west over the Bluegrass, and to the east over the Knobs, have an idea that their town is already boss of the whole shebang, and a few lines of poetry, similar to the above, will only make them smile and point the finger of scorn at the poet. They talk that way anyhow, and they have a hustling spirit which may yet surmount the insurmountable.

Mt. Sterling, or, as Historian Collins calls it, Mount Sterling, is the county seat of Montgomery county, and Montgomery county is one of the half-way counties, that is to say, when you are there you are half-way to the Bluegrass and half-way to the Knobs.

Montgomery, the twenty-second in the order of counties, was formed out of Clark in 1796, and since that time portions of it have been grafted onto eighteen other counties, so that what is left of it is "little, but oh my." It was named in honor of Gen. Richard Montgomery, who was killed at the battle of Quebec in 1775.

Mt. Sterling became a town in 1792, and was named, according to Mr. Collins, from Mr. Stirling, who owned the land on which it was built, but according to good local authority, it was called Mount, because it was near Little Mountain, the site of "Estill's Defeat," and Sterling, because an old Scotsman, who was present at the time of its birth, wanted to do honor to his native town of Stirling, and nobody knew that that Stirling spelled its name with an i. The reader may take his choice.

The town, I beg pardon, the city, contains a population of 5,000, though several authorities intimated to me that it was 8,000, and one man whom I asked answered in a nonchalant and insouciant manner, like a Chicago man: "Oh, I reckon about 12,000 or 15,000." Right here you may set it down that there is nothing small about Mt. Sterling.

Of its population, nobody could say how much was colored, for the gentle gerrymander has got most of that element outside of the city limits so as not to cluster up the polling places at election times. This is a wise precaution in communities where the vote is close.

The public school is housed in a handsome new building costing \$18,000 and commandingly situated. The principal is Mrs. Nannie Hibler, at a salary of \$75 a month, with eight assistants at \$50 and \$40 a month, and 706 scholars enrolled. In addition to this school is another to accommodate the 1,500 white residents of the outskirts. Its principal is Miss Burroughs, with three assistants.

The colored schools have 731 pupils enrolled. J. S. Estill is the principal, with eight assistants, at an average

salary of \$50 each.

The private school flourishes in its pristine glory; besides the smaller schools, there are the Kentucky Training School for Boys, with Major Fowler as principal; the Harris Institute and Emerson Institute for Girls, and Goodwin's High School for Boys. Education simply grows on the trees in Mt. Sterling.

The sects are well represented in church buildings, but there isn't a really handsome church in the town. Several of them have mostly gone to steeple. The Presbyterians (N and S.) have two churches, one, the First, a quaint old structure, will have reached its hundredth year in 1895; the Christians, Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians and Catholics have one each. The Catholic is the best building of that denomination I have yet seen. The Methodists have the best looking church, the Christians the most expensive (\$16,000), and the Christians are the most numerous and the richest, notwithstanding we have it that a rich man cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Pastoral salaries range from \$1,000 to \$1,800 per annum, and the Christians, Methodists and Episcopalians own their own parsonages, but Episcopalians rent theirs, as they are not able to maintain a pastor regularly.

The colored people have three churches, Baptist, Methodist and Christian, the latter two of brick, and the Methodist church, which has recently had \$2,000 spent on it in improvements, is the most attractive looking church building of them all. Financially speaking, all the Mt. Sterling churches are out of debt.

The city government is conducted by a Mayor (Adam Baum), at a salary of \$100 a year, and eight Councilmen at \$50 a year each.

And here a word for the Mayor. He was born in Germany, an unusual thing for a man who holds office in Kentucky; he is a Democrat, an unusual thing for a German; he is rich, which is not usual for his thrifty people; and he began his career as a merchant in Mt. Sterling with a pack on his back. It is men like Mayor Baum we need in Kentucky, and his career is an example to every young fellow now growing up in the State.

The Chief of Police is C. T. Wilson, with \$800 a year and fees, and he has four men at \$50 a month each, with an extra dollar for every arrest made, and there are several made during the course of a year, for Mt. Sterling is like the little girl we read of in the poem:

"When she is good, she is very good, indeed,
But when she is bad, she is horrid."

Of course, Mt. Sterling never is "horrid," but that's the way the poem goes.

The Police Judge is Ben R. Turner, at \$900 a year and fees, and the City Attorney is H. Clay McKee at \$900. The reader will observe that Bro. McKee parts his name in the middle; his hair is parted that way also, but

he doesn't do it.

The city tax is seventy-five cents, with thirty cents additional for schools, and the county and State amount to \$1, which gives Mt. Sterling the lead of her sister towns on taxes, but it will be less after this year, so they told me.

The Fire Department consists of two fine steam engines with volunteer companies and a chief (J. L. Conroy). The men are paid when on duty.

Speaking of Fire Departments reminds me of water works, and Mt. Sterling just at present is laying for somebody with a club on the water works question. The works were to have been in operation by the 25th of October, but that date passed without them. As the field now stands the water is to come from Hinkston river, quite near town, where there is a seven-acre reservoir with a twenty-five acre reservoir in reserve, as it were; a stand-pipe, to be 125 feet high has its foundation on the hill near town, and the city will take seventy-five plugs at \$50 each for the first fifty and \$40 for all additional.

At present the city's water supply comes from cisterns, more than from wells. I mean by that, the people have got onto the fact that well water is not the kind of water to drink, and they have made cisterns for themselves, and every town in the State ought to go and do likewise before typhoid fever becomes a permanent resident in its midst, so to speak.

The Montgomery County Court House has the blue ribbon on good looks. It stands high to itself, and as it was finished only in 1890, it has all the modern conveniences, including

replace one burned during the war in one of the flights that occurred in the town. I presume it is hardly necessary for me to state that there is a clock in the tower. The material in the building is pressed brick and stone.

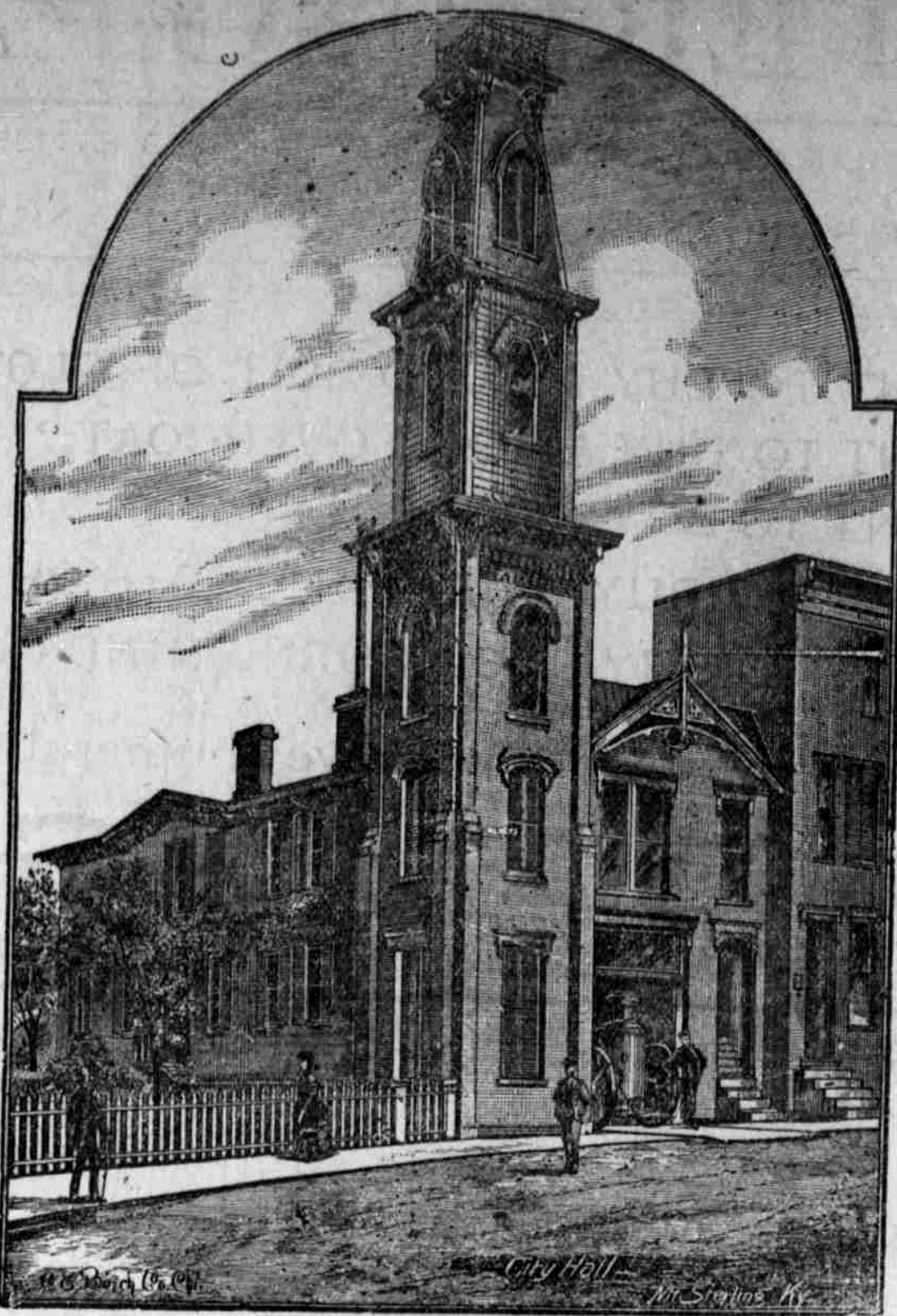
The jail and jailer's residence are just across the street from the Court House. The residence part cost \$8,000 and the jail cost \$12,000. It is of Roman freestone, and has a wall around it that Joshua couldn't blow down with forty blasts on his ram's horn.

Mt. Sterling is rich in lawyer-though the lawyers may not be rich.



PUBLIC GRADED SCHOOL BUILDING.

in Mt. Sterling, and a careful census shows that there are forty at the Montgomery county bar. Think of a town of 5,000 people with forty lawyers! Can any other town in the State make such a showing? Still stranger, they all make a living at it, and seem to be pretty well satisfied. The cause of this is that they practice over most of the mountain counties to the east, and have plenty to do. The oldest attorney is Judge B. J. Peters, ex-Chief Justice, and on the bench for sixteen years, who at eighty-nine goes to his office every day. He is the oldest practicing attorney in the State,



CITY HALL.

un, is presented what I should say was the finest scenic display in Central Kentucky. A beautiful, rolling country dotted with groves and green fields stretches away for ten miles or more, and rising on the sky line like a hedge of misty, hazy blue that shuts it in are the foothills of the great mountains, which lie beyond and extend eastward for two hundred miles.

In the cemetery are many fine monuments, the finest being that to Judge Richard Reid, costing \$6,000. On the grave of Benjamin Robertson is the marble figure of his favorite dog, "Fury."

One of the distinguished citizens, who showed me over the grounds, told me the name of the cemetery was "McPahan," and was of Irish descent, and when I told him I thought it was biblical and meant "doubling," he looked serious and remarked: "Of course, of course; ain't Dublin the capital of Ireland?" and then I hadn't any more to say, but I hope he will look the matter up in Genesis. P.S.—Genesis is a book in the Bible.

There is no Y. M. C. A. in town, though there used to be and ought to be now. Why it made an assignment I was not informed.

There is an Associated Charities, which does a great deal of good in a quiet way. Its President is Wm. Mitchell, one time President of the late Farmers Bank, and now a poor man. Mr. Mitchell's charities were unostentatious but extensive, and he gave to the deserving as much as \$45,000.

There is in Mt. Sterling what is not in most towns of this section, to-wit: a city building, in which the City Court

is the librarian.

Among the lodges are the Masons, Odd Fellows, K. of P. and the Y. M. I., a Catholic organization. The Odd Fellows own their own building, and the Masons built themselves a temple costing \$32,000, but somehow they over-financed themselves and could not retain possession of it.

The business houses are on Main and Maysville streets, and they are the best business houses I have seen outside of the large cities. Not content with brick, these merchants have built handsome stone-front houses that are worthy of a place anywhere. The Tyler & Apperson four-story stone front leads the list. It cost \$30,000, has steam heat and electric lights and will have an elevator when the water works are completed. Then there are the buildings of Drake & Bigstaff, Odd Fellows, Baum, T. P. Martin, the building occupied by Sutton & Smith, and the Masonic Temple. The stone is a light gray from Rowan county, and cost about what brick does. At least, when they were adding an ell to the hotel the brick gave out and they finished it in massive stone that looks like a fortress, but it only shows from the back.



TYLER-APPERSON BLOCK.

The business streets, Main and Maysville, are sixty and fifty feet wide, and when the visitor walks up from the station to Main street he is greeted with a city smell that not one small town in a thousand has. It is an indescribable sort of an order, but it smells of commerce and trade, and any one who has ever been in the narrow streets of a great commercial city will recognize it at once. Be that what it is, Mt. Sterling has a big wholesale trade with the mountains, and has had for years. There are four wholesale groceries, one groceries and whisky and two which do considerable jobbing in dry goods and drugs. One of these houses has, I am informed, sold as much as \$500,000 worth in one year. I may add here that more of the wealthy men have made their money merchandising than in any other Bluegrass town. The town crows over its trade, too, and promises itself great things for the future.

The manufacturing interests are represented by an ice plant, two planing mills, a hoghead factory, two flour mills, a woolen mill, two machine shops, two carriage factories, a steam laundry, and the Newmarket



RESIDENCE T. K. BARNES.

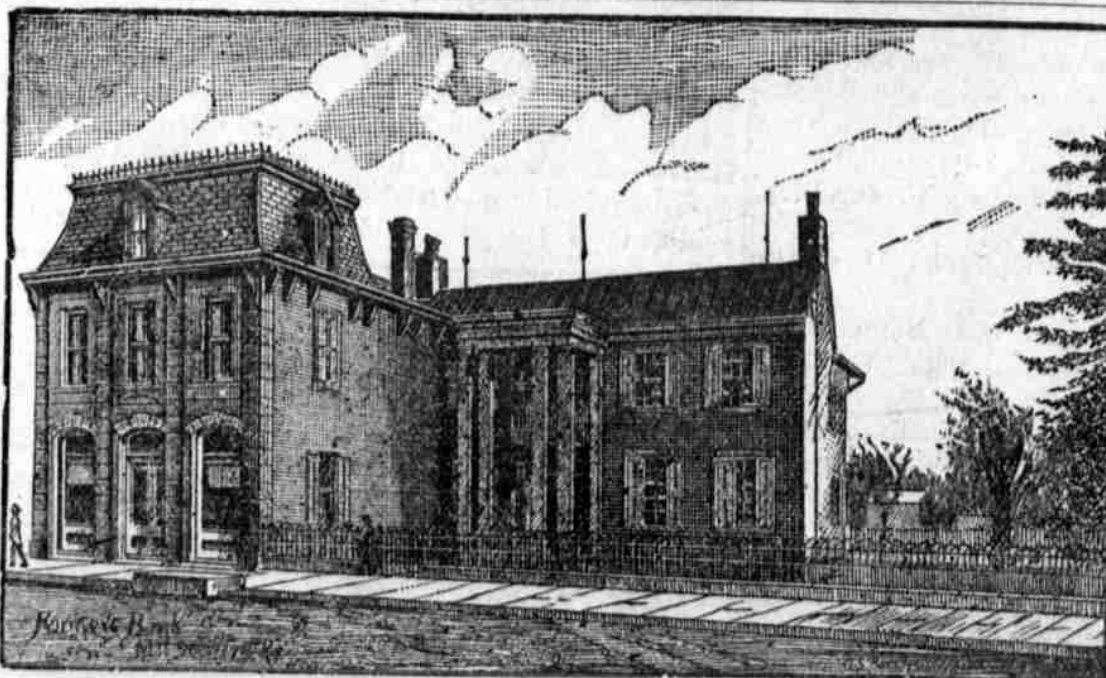
distillery with a capacity of 200 barrels a day, enough to keep the police busy for two hundred years, if it kept going all the time.

Gas and electricity are the illuminants, but the city uses no gas on the streets. The people use it at \$2.50 a thousand and 20 per cent. discount if paid promptly. The city has \$2,000 a year for its gas and incandescent lights, both of which are required to light up the burg the way they want it lighted.

There is one hotel, and from a brief inspection I should say it was above the average. In any event, it is so far superior to what the town had once before when I visited it, that I may safely say it is first-class.

There are three banks, one national, with a combined capital of \$350,000, and they are doing a lot better than some banks have done in the same neighborhood.

The residences are good and substantial, without being elegant and elaborate. The best of them run along in cost from \$10,000 to \$15,000,



FARMERS' BANK.

fire-proof vaults and a handsome court-room. The remarkable part of it is that it only cost \$26,000—that is, it only cost the county that much. What it cost the contractor has never been stated. Builders say such a structure could not be erected for less than \$60,000. This Court House was built to replace one, too small for the business, which was built in 1865 to

and possibly in the entire country. The health of the town is reported good, although there are fifteen white and two colored doctors, a larger showing than any other town I have investigated.

Out on the hill, to the east, is the cemetery, owned by the Odd Fellows, and called Machpelah. From its highest point, looking toward the rising

is held; also cells for transient guests of the police, a fire engine room and the rooms of the city library. Right here let me say this library is the kind all towns ought to have. It contains several thousand volumes, is well patronized, and the city appropriates \$200 a year for the purchase of new books. What other town can say as much for itself? Mrs. Cassie Redmon